

A journey into Inquiry

INTENT

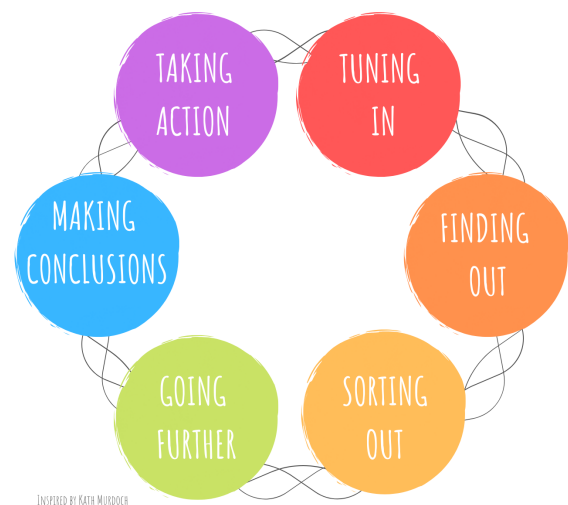
Inquiry is the process by which we ask questions and discover new things. In education terms it is a shift away from the traditional model of teachers sharing knowledge, towards a model where students ask their own questions to discover their own knowledge

When you teach a child something you take away forever his chance of discovering it for himself.

Jean Piaget 1972

The inquiry process follows a **constructivist** approach to learning, in that students construct knowledge based on their experiences and ideas.

The process of inquiry has often been described as a cycle, but in practice it is much more complex and organic. There are clear stages in the inquiry process but they may be revisited more than once throughout the learning journey.



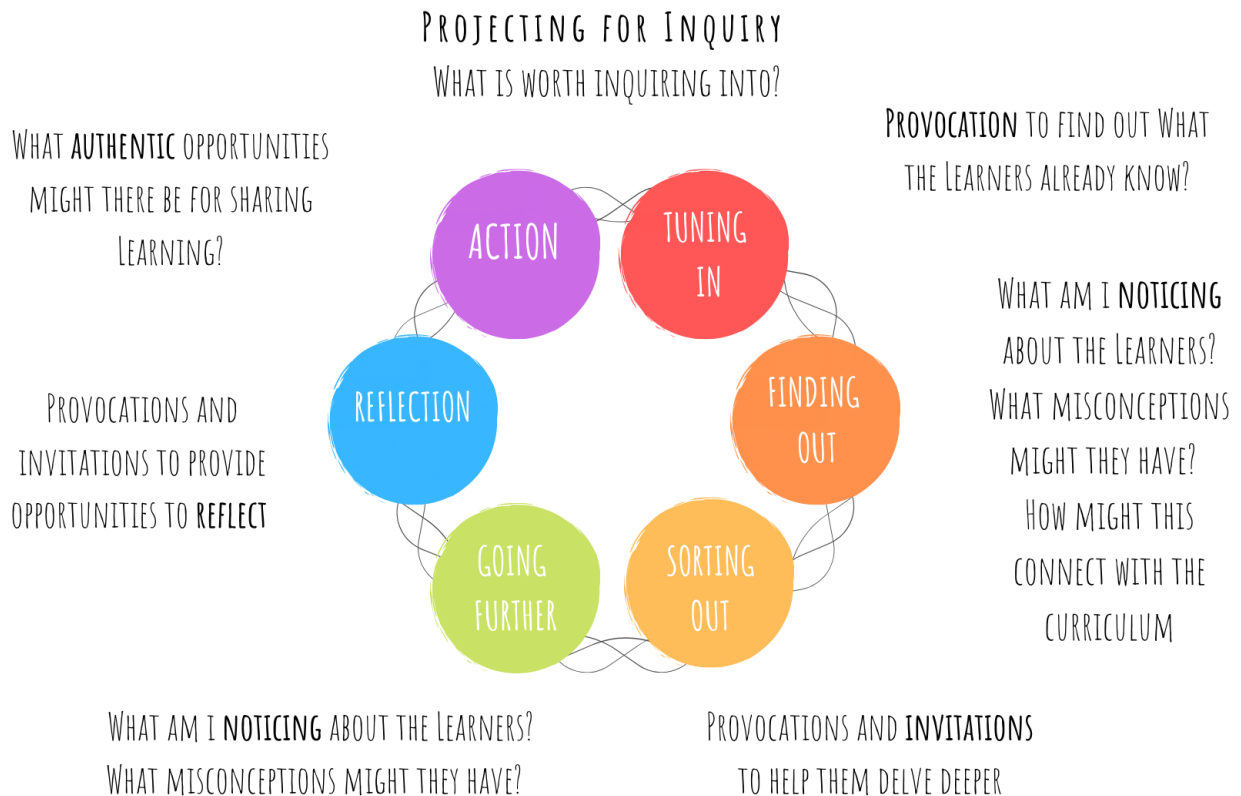
Student Agency is having the opportunity to choose what, where, how, when, and with who you learn. The global workplace is changing rapidly. Our six year old students may be working in jobs that haven't yet been invented, with technology that is yet to be developed. We have a duty to prepare our learners with the skills needed to thrive in such an environment. We need students to develop skills of creativity, communication, collaboration and critical thinking. We want them to be literate in technology, information and media. We want them to have the chance to practice being flexible, try out leadership, take initiative, play with productivity, and develop their social skills.

Learning sticks when it is **authentic**, and when students have an authentic need to learn. When students need to know something that is important to them it is difficult to stop them learning. We want to harness this natural curiosity and desire to learn through inquiries that allow for student agency. In order to do this, inquiries are **concept driven** which allows children the opportunity to follow their own pathways. For example, an inquiry into systems for survival may spark an interest in dinosaurs and volcanos, map reading and outdoor survival skills, or how to navigate friendships groups on social media. It all stems from the children and their experiences and ideas.

We want students to leave primary school as confident inquirers, who ask thoughtful questions and have the skills to go about finding out the answers for themselves. We want students to be divergent thinkers, researchers, analysts, reflective citizens. We want students to know how to learn.

IMPLEMENTATION

We offer multiple **transdisciplinary** inquiries each year, most lasting for a half a term. Each inquiry is driven by concepts that allow for the students to develop an understanding of a 'Big Idea' as well as gaining subject specific knowledge.



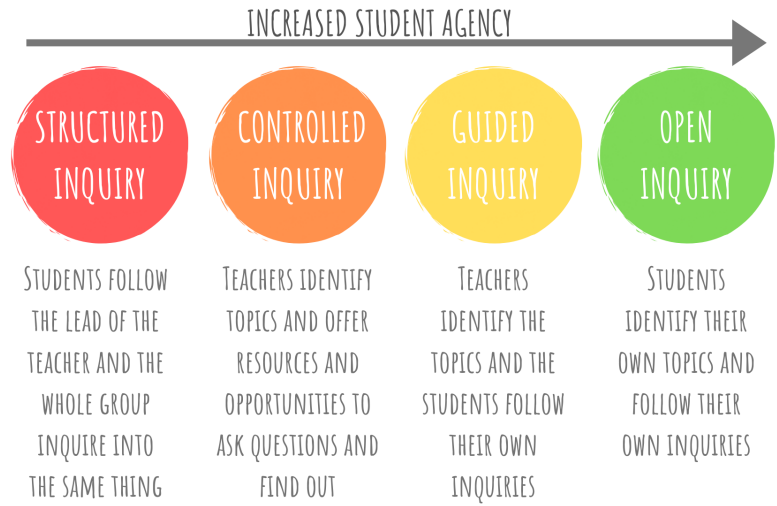
Teachers meet to unpack the concepts at the beginning of each term. They anticipate the types of learning experiences that they children might be interested in. They also link the appropriate learning objectives from the National Curriculum to the inquiry.

Teachers set the environment and offer provocations at the beginning of each inquiry as part of the tuning-in stage. They document the children's questions, understandings and misconceptions. Teachers collaborate to discuss what they are noticing and wondering, in order to plan for next steps.

Documentation plays a vital role in the inquiry process. Teachers and students document their thinking and experiences, in order to reflect on them. Documentation may take the form of photos, videos, writing, drawings, models, or art work.

Teachers collaborate throughout an inquiry at weekly meetings and by sharing documentation on the shared google drive. Teachers take an inquiry stance in their work, attending workshops, reading articles and trying out new ideas.

There are different levels of inquiry depending on the skills, ages and experience of the students. Teachers choose an appropriate inquiry process for their group of learners. As students have increased agency over their learning, the role of the teacher starts to change. Teachers take on the role of facilitator, observing closely the child's learning journey, and offering nudges and next steps to take them further.



BANCHE AND BELL (2001)

Cultural Capital is...

21 CENTURY SKILLS

Collaboration

Critical Thinking

Communication

Creativity

Information

Media

Technology

Flexibility

Leadership

Social

Initiative

Productivity

'...the essential knowledge that pupils need to be educated citizens, introducing them to the best that has been thought and said and helping to engender an appreciation of human creativity and achievement.'
Ofsted School Inspection Handbook 2019

Transdisciplinary inquiries give students the opportunity for authentic, real-world experiences, where they start to take control of their own learning. Inquiries are non-linear and need to be navigated.

Learning through inquiry allows students to develop cultural capital in the form of self-confidence, tolerance, grit, perseverance, objectivity, growth mindset, creativity, innovation, and flexibility. We want our learners to develop skills for the 21st Century.

Transdisciplinary learning also allows students the chance to make connections between subject specific knowledge through a conceptual lens. For example we want our students to have a scientific understanding of the properties of materials and we want our students to have a Design Technology understanding of how materials can be manipulated to create new things. Through the concepts of innovation and transformation these subject knowledge pieces can be brought together for an authentic purpose.

LEARNER PROFILE

Providing a curriculum rich in Inquiry based learning allows our children to nurture their talents and passions and take control of their learning. They are driven by both their own curiosity and hunger for learning and their teacher's ability to provoke their interest by using stimulating resources and artefacts. We intend for our learners to be:

Open-minded: Appreciate their own and others' cultures, history, values and traditions and be willing to grow from their experiences.

Thinkers: Approach cross-curricular tasks by thinking logically, creatively and critically and able to adapt thinking as they learn through reflection. Make reasoned and ethical decisions as a result.

Inquirers: Learn independently and with others, nurturing curiosity and developing skills for inquiry and research. Foster enthusiasm and sustaining a love of learning throughout life.

Caring: Have empathy and show compassion and respect. Make a positive difference in the lives of others and in the world around them.

Communicators: Communicate ideas confidently and creatively in different ways for different purposes (confident, responsive, respectful) listen carefully to different perspectives.

Risk-takers: Approach uncertainty with forethought and determination, exploring new ideas and innovative strategies. Be resourceful and resilient in the face of challenges and change.

Knowledgeable: Explore knowledge across a range of disciplines. Engage with local and global issues and ideas.

Balanced: Recognise the interdependence with other people and the world we live in. Understand the importance of balancing our lives - intellectual, physical and emotional - to achieve well-being.

Reflective: Have thoughtful consideration of the world and our own ideas and experiences. Understand our strengths and weaknesses to support our learning and personal development.

Principled: Act with integrity and honesty, having a strong sense of fairness and justice. Respect rights and take responsibility for our actions and their consequences.

IMPACT

The success of student conceptual understanding is measured against criteria set at the beginning of the inquiry. Documentation is collected that evidences the learning and tells the story of the journey. Learning is made visible to students and the wider community of parents through exhibitions, performances and displays. Students are self-reflective, identifying what they have learned, what they found tricky and what they would do differently next time.

Teachers are reflective throughout the inquiry, taking note of what works well and what is challenging. These reflections are shared with the collaborative team in order to inform the next planning process.

Parents are invited to join the learning journey through their engagement with Seesaw (our online sharing learning platform). Parents are encouraged to read their child's updates with the child, sparking conversations and possible next steps. This takes inquiry learning outside the classroom and involves an authentic audience.

How do we show that children have met their objectives?

Teachers collaborate to identify National Curriculum objectives from multiple subjects in the Rolling Programme. These objectives guide teacher's choice of provocations and invitations, which are documented in the shared Google Drive. Teachers meet at the end of the inquiry to share the stories of learning and identify which provocations and invitations allowed the students to gain a deep understanding of the objectives.

The National Curriculum objectives that have been covered are recorded and evidenced in the Shared Drive.

What the students have to say...

What are your thoughts on inquiry learning?

- I like learning history
- Fun - because instead of being about one thing you can choose
- I like it

What do you like best?

- Presenting what I've learnt and making it
- Group work
- You get to choose what to do rather than being told to do a certain thing

What do you find tricky?

- Deciding how to present
- Choosing what to do and how to present
- Researching

What OFSTED has to say...

"The 'inquiry' curriculum provides many opportunities for children to learn both indoors and outdoors. Children are supported to develop independence and build resilience" (Germoe)

"Leaders, including governors, have a clear, ambitious vision for the school. This is to promote pupils' creativity and individuality. To achieve this vision, leaders have adopted an inquiry-based approach to teaching. A well-designed and sequenced curriculum supports this approach." (Boskenwyn)

Progression of skills

Inquiry skills begin to develop from birth. Babies and young children explore the world around them through their senses, exploration, and repetition. As children gain language one of the most common phrases we hear is 'why?'. Although we understand that the skills of inquiry are naturally present in young children, we know that we need to offer explicit teaching of these skills in order for them to flourish. The progression of development for these skills is linked to the amount of support and guidance the child needs. There needs to be a gradual release responsibility from the teacher to the student. At The Federation of Boskenwyn and Germoe Schools we offer inquiry-based learning in every year group, enabling children to develop and practice these skills with appropriate adult support.

Inquiry Skills

- exploring, wondering and questioning
- experimenting and playing with possibilities
- making connections between previous learning and current learning
- making predictions and acting purposefully to see what happens
- collecting data and reporting findings
- clarifying existing ideas and reappraising perceptions of events
- applying concepts to deepen conceptual understandings
- researching and seeking information
- establishing and testing theories
- solving problems in a variety of ways
- taking and defending a position

Children develop inquiry skills through explicit teaching and the opportunity to practice being an inquirer in a safe and supportive environment. This table shows the progression of skills from Reception to Year 6.

	EYFS	KS1	Lower KS2	Upper KS2
Curiosity	Shows curiosity by playing and exploring. Uses senses to explore	Explores the world around them and asks simple questions	Raises own relevant questions about the world around them	Identifies own passions and interests and raises questions about them in the context of the inquiry
Experimenting	Finds ways to solve problems/ new ways to do things	Carry out simple tests, devise ways to find out answers to their questions.	Makes a plan for how to find out answers to questions. Uses a range of methods (practical and secondary sources)	Makes and plan for how to find out answers to questions. Uses a range of methods. Recognises which secondary sources will be most useful. Begin to separate opinion from fact.

Use action or innovation to make improvements to a situation or solve a problem	Inform a target group	Change my own behaviour/inspire others to make different choices	Create something to build on my understanding
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organise an event • Create a game • Do something for charity • Develop an app • Start a club • Write a persuasive letter or email • Invent and sell a product 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build a website • Start a social media campaign • Start a club or group • Create an advert • Present information on a powerpoint to an audience • Organise a photo or art gallery • Give a talk • Write a letter or email 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep a reflective journal or diary • Run a competition • Start a campaign • Create a motivational poster and put it up in the community • Organise a discussion group • Put a regular challenge in place at school or in the community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use the design process to create a product or system • Write a program using code • Make a 2D or 3D model • Create a piece of art • Design a science experiment • Teach someone else a skill or knowledge that you have learnt

Making sense	Asks questions, makes links and notices patterns	Asks questions, uses books and internet to find out more	Makes systematic and careful observations. Asks more questions.	Make their own designs about what observations to make, what to record and how to interpret their findings.
Documenting	Asks adult to take a photo, draws a picture	With support from the teacher, records ideas through photos, video, voice recordings	Records ideas through writing, drawing, photos, videos, voice recordings	Chooses their own way to record ideas (journal, notebook, Seesaw, video diary etc)
Reflection	Talks about what they did and what happened	Talks about what they found out and how they found it out	Talk about what they found out, how they found it out and what they have learned.	Talk about what they found out, how they found it out and what they have learned. Identify what was hard and what they might do differently.

<p>Sharing Learning and Taking Action</p>	<p>Talks about their learning with parents and teachers. Engages in teacher led authentic action</p>	<p>Shares learning on Seesaw with other students, teachers and family. Helps to identify and take part in authentic action</p>	<p>Shares learning on Seesaw with other students, teachers and family. Identifies and takes part in authentic action</p>	<p>Shares learning on Seesaw with other students, teachers and family. Shares learning with a wider audience through authentic action</p>
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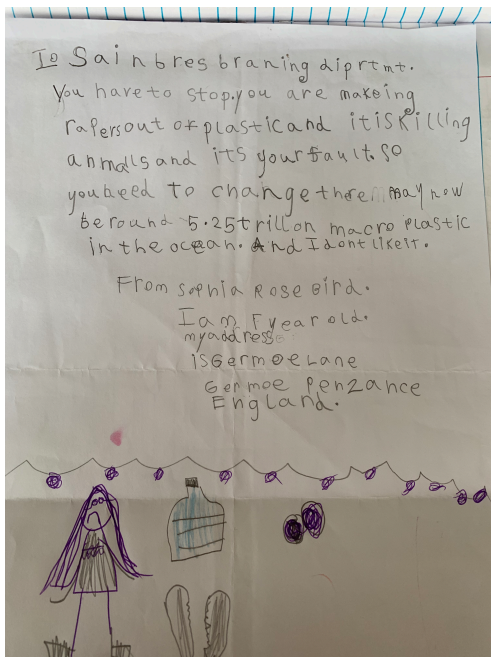
Taking Action

At the end of each inquiry the students take action. This showcases the learning that has taken place throughout the inquiry. In order to take action students need to have a good understanding of the driving concepts and subject knowledge. Action may take the form of advocacy, social entrepreneurship, social justice, participation or lifestyle choices.



Action might be...

Examples of action at the end of our inquiry into 'Strategise for Success'. The children decided that a successful world would not have so much plastic pollution. They signed up to become a Plastic Free School with Surfers Against Sewage, did regular beach clean, created art from found materials, and wrote letters to major supermarkets.



This is what inquiry looks like at Boskenwyn and Germoe...

